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Gorbachev greets Senators Robert Byrd, center, and Strom Thurmond, left.

President Faces Rocky Climb to the Summit

Reagan must cope with a fast-moving Gorbachev as well as deep splits over strategy within his own team.

As the presummit propaganda struggle heats up, Mikhail Gorbachev is clearly gaining the initiative over Ronald Reagan.

In an orchestrated string of developments, the Soviet leader has moved out quickly to project the image of a reasonable, peace-loving statesman intent on achieving a major breakthrough in arms control at his November 19-20 meeting in Geneva with Reagan.

He has managed to throw the President on the defensive by drawing a contrast between an ostensibly conciliatory Soviet line and the tough stance taken in recent weeks by the U.S. administration, which he accuses of waging a "campaign of hatred" and accelerating a dangerous arms race.

In attempting to wrest the initiative from Gorbachev, Reagan is operating under a distinct handicap. For one thing, while the Kremlin leader strives to inflate summit hopes, the White House is bent on minimizing popular expectations to avoid the danger of a letdown after the November superpower meeting.

In the words of a State Department official: "They're putting the monkey on our back. Just when we're trying to tone down expectations over what will come out of the summit, the Soviets are trying to raise them."

More important, the deep differences within his administration over how to deal with the Soviets and how to handle the Strategic Defense Initiative complicate the President's efforts to compete with Gorbachev in the battle for world—and especially European—opinion.

The principal challenge facing Reagan in the weeks leading up to the meeting: How to avoid being blamed for a failure to lay the basis for an agreement to curb the arms race without repudiating policies that he deems crucial for national security.

"The Soviet strategy," says an administration official, "is aimed at enabling Moscow to point an accusing finger at Washington when nothing major results from the Reagan-Gorbachev talks—which is exactly what we anticipate from the summit."

In pursuing that strategy, Gorbachev in rapid-fire order—

- Offered in a Kremlin meeting with eight U.S. senators to make "radical proposals" to reduce offensive nuclear weapons once Reagan agrees to bar the development and deployment of space weapons. This would impose a ban on Reagan's Star Wars missile-defense program except for what the Soviet leader termed "fundamental research."
- Announced the suspension of Soviet nuclear tests through this year and invited the U.S. to follow suit.
- Warned that Moscow will end its unilateral moratorium on testing and deployment of antisatellite weapons if the U.S. goes through with an ASAT test against a target in space. The American shot actually was scheduled for September 4 but was postponed to avoid violating an advance-notice requirement mandated by Congress.
- Declared in an interview in *Time* magazine that "we certainly attach tremendous importance to the summit even though we do hear from the other side that they are taking a much more modest view of the meeting."

Gorbachev scored points not only with his apparent flexibility on substance but even more with the sophisticated style he displayed in his meetings with American senators and editors. One example cited by a key administration official: Throughout a lengthy interview, the Soviet leader, aware of Reagan's popularity in the U.S., avoided any personal criticism of the President himself. Instead, he focused his attack on presidential advisers or the "American position."

The skillful performance of the 54-year-old Kremlin leader is being contrasted with the inept behavior of his aged and ailing predecessors over the past decade. He is widely regarded as a formidable adversary for the 74-year-old Reagan, who has his own reputation as a great communicator.

The initial White House response to Gorbachev's freewheeling psychological warfare was to maintain its low-key approach to the summit and the prospects of a breakthrough on arms control. Presidential spokesman Larry Speakes declared that Reagan "is willing to meet the Soviets halfway in an effort to solve problems," but the spokesman continued to play down the likelihood of major substantive results.

Mutual analysis. "The important thing," he said, "is to have the two men look each other over, size each other up, lay out their views on these various topics and then be able to set up an agenda to deal with these in the future."

Speakes spoke of a built-in advantage that Gorbachev enjoys in the pre-summit-propaganda battle, pointing to the unilateral access accorded the Soviet leader to the American media. Calling for reciprocity in this field, he declared: "If President Reagan had a comparable opportunity to present his views to the Soviet people through the Soviet media, this would doubtless improve our dialogue."

However, Reagan's biggest problem in competing with Gorbachev is not access to the Soviet media but rather the controversy over Star Wars. The President maintains that the develop-

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BUILDING A BETTER SPYTRAP

JOHN REES

As Congress reconvened, high on the agenda of the intelligence oversight committees was the question of America's capability in the craft of counterintelligence.

Plainly put: "Are we any good at catching spies?"

The question is a real one. During recent months, the number of highly damaging incidents of Soviet espionage against the United States in third-party countries and at home have seriously compromised our national security. The impression is that the Soviet KGB and its satellite services are operating against us with a high degree of impunity.

That is not entirely accurate; but unfortunately the negative impression is strengthened by the necessity of keeping secret many of the facts surrounding cases of detected spies. It would be folly to let our enemies know precisely how and when their intelligence operations went wrong.

Still, the question of our counterintelligence effectiveness remains. Already intelligence aficionados have opened a heated debate as to how our national counterintelligence effort should be reorganized.

The 1970s witch-hunt against the U.S. intelligence agencies, waged by a coalition of critics and members of the House and Senate, came close to putting the United States out of the intelligence business. This was a symbiotic relationship: the critics — centered in academia and the media — advanced their careers as self-appointed "experts" and advisers to Congress, and our elected officials obtained headlines.

This went on until they succeeded in gutting and demoralizing the FBI, CIA, and military intelligence agencies. Significantly, the anti-intelligence campaign focused on two areas: collection of information, especially by human sources, and counterintelligence.

President Reagan's director of Central Intelligence, William Casey, has begun the painstaking task of rebuilding U.S. intelligence-collection capability — against congressional opposition, leaks, innuendoes, and generally hostile national media. Now the critics of intelligence work are seeking to remake the counterintelligence function of the United States to their own liking. For this purpose they are utilizing the recent "rash" of spy cases and the threat of international terrorism.

This is not to suggest that U.S. counterintelligence programs do not need enhancement. They do; but this cannot be blamed only on the intelligence witch-hunts of the past decade. Former intelligence officers have conceded that the U.S. intelligence community provided mere lip service to the "discipline" of counterintelligence. Protecting the integrity of U.S. secrets was never a first priority.

The new batch of counterintelligence critics has proposed congressional chartering of a national counterintelligence directorate. This would provide them with certain advantages — the Congress would require a couple of new oversight subcommittees with budgets, chairmanships, staff positions to be filled, and consultancy positions for the academics. There is, of course, a problem. The concept of a centralized counterintelligence directorate is quite alien to the American tradition and goes against the trend of congressional and popular suspicion of any government agency that smacks of Orwellian "Big Brotherism."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been charged with the domestic counterintelligence function for half a century. The academic critics backing the "national counterintelligence agency" proposal view the FBI unfairly as a collection of ignorant, unsophisticated "cops" who lack advanced university degrees and "therefore" lack the sophistication, understanding of the world, and the insight necessary to do a good counterintelligence job.

The buzz word among these critics is "multidisciplinary." It serves only to obscure the real function of counterintelligence:

- To determine what our enemies want their spies to find out about us;
- To determine what they intend to do to us or about us;
- To decide what we are going to do in response.

The truth is that the structures for the conduct and coordination of effective counterintelligence programs inside and outside the United States already are in place. What is needed is a policy decision by our leaders and those they have appointed to carry out policy in the CIA, FBI, and military services that counterintelligence will be elevated to the high level commensurate with its importance. Lip service no longer will do.

The art of counterintelligence must be given political and bureaucratic recognition equal to the other elements of intelligence. Those who become counterintelligence experts must be given the same career-advancement opportunities open to those in other intelligence fields.

This is not to say that counterintelligence officers who do not measure up should be coddled. Intelligence veterans emphasize that there should be strict oversight of funds and manpower. Furthermore, the definitions of counterintelligence now vary widely among the various services. Often counterintelligence is confused with ordinary, commonsense security matters.

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